CLAIMS

1. A resin composition comprising a polyphenylene ether and a flame retardant, wherein said polyphenylene ether is obtained by polymerizing a monomer comprising 100 parts by weight of 2,6-dimethylphenol and 0.5-7.5 parts by weight of ortho cresol in the presence of a catalyst and an oxygen-containing gas.

2. The resin composition according to item 1 above, wherein said polyphenylene ether has a molecular weight distribution of 2.8-8.0.

3. The resin composition according to item 1 above, wherein said resin composition further includes a styrene resin.

4. The resin composition according to item 3 above, which comprises 5-95 parts by weight of the polyphenylene ether, 95-5 parts by weight of the styrene resin and 1-30 parts by weight, based on 100 parts by weight of the polyphenylene ether and the styrene resin, of the flame retardant.

5. The resin composition according to item 1 above, wherein said flame retardant is at least one compound selected from the group consisting of a halogen compound, a silicone compound and a phosphorous compound.

6. A process for producing a resin composition comprising a polyphenylene ether and a flame retardant, which comprises:

polymerizing a monomer comprising 100 parts by weight of 2,6-dimethylphenol and 0.5-7.5 parts by weight of ortho cresol in the presence of a catalyst and an oxygen-containing gas to obtain a polyphenylene ether, and

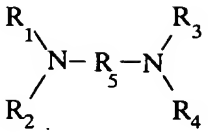
mixing said polyphenylene ether with a flame retardant.

7. The process according to item 6 above, wherein said monomer is 2,6-dimethylphenol containing ortho cresol.

8. The process according to item 6 above, wherein said 2,6-dimethylphenol and said ortho cresol are separately fed.

9. The process according to item 6 above, wherein said catalyst comprises a copper compound, a halogen compound and a diamine compound represented by the following

formula (1):

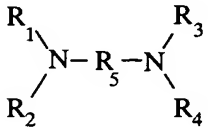


(1)

wherein R_1, R_2, R_3 and R_4 each independently represents a hydrogen or a linear or branched C_{1-6} alkyl group, with the proviso that they do not represent hydrogen at the same time; and R_5 represents a linear or methyl-branched C_{2-5} alkylene group.

10. The process according to item 9 above, wherein said catalyst further comprises at least one of a tertiary monoamine compound and a secondary monoamine compound.

11. A polyphenylene ether having molecular weight distribution of 2.8-8.0, which is obtained by polymerizing a monomer comprising 100 parts by weight of 2,6-dimethylphenol and 0.5-7.5 parts by weight of ortho cresol in the presence of an oxygen-containing gas and a catalyst comprising a copper compound, a halogen compound and a diamine compound represented by the following formula (1):



(1)

wherein R_1, R_2, R_3 and R_4 each independently represents hydrogen or a linear or branched C_{1-6} alkyl group, with the proviso that they do not represent hydrogen at the same time; and R_5 represents a linear or methyl-branched C_{2-5} alkylene group.